

A SOCIAL SERVICE CATECHISM

Prepared by

**THE COMMISSION ON THE CHURCH
AND SOCIAL SERVICE**

of the

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It is based, in the main, on the original Social Service Catechism prepared for the Social Service Commission of the Northern Baptist Convention, adapted for interdenominational use.

A SOCIAL SERVICE CATECHISM

1. What is Social Service?

Social Service is that form of effort for man's redemption which seeks to uplift and transform his associated and community life. As such it is the social application of Christian principles, and is a new name for that spirit of philanthropy and service which is as old as Christianity.

2. Why do you call it Social Service?

Because it deals with man as a social being in his social relations, and with social causes and conditions; because it demands social and collective action, and seeks not only to save men but to embody their Christian life in social institutions.

3. What warrant is there for social service in the Scriptures?

Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

Above all is the example of Jesus himself, who went about doing good, helping the needy, adjusting the relations of men, and seeking to establish justice among men.

4. What is the fundamental idea of social service?

The idea of the kingdom of God, which in the Christian conception of things may mean much more than a human society on earth, but can never mean anything less.

5. How is social service related to other forms of Christian activity?

In the complete program of the kingdom there are four chief items: Evangelism—winning men unto Jesus Christ; missions—making the good news known to the nations; education—training lives for the kingdom and building them up in Christ-likeness; and social service—serving the whole life of man and building a Christian social order.

6. What is meant by social salvation?

The deliverance of human society from disease, poverty, crime, and misery; the development and perfection of the institutions of man's associated life, and the construction of a social order that is the city of God on earth.

7. What are the chief items in the social service program?

The relief of need and distress, the prevention of poverty and crime, the provision for all of the conditions of a clean, healthy, moral and spiritual life, the creation of a social atmosphere which shall induce a right course of conduct, the adjustment of men's relations in justice and brotherhood.

8. Why should Christians be most active in social service?

For the reason that social service works in line with the Lord's Prayer, in that it seeks to create such conditions that every life can earn its daily bread, that needless temptation may be removed from men, and boys and girls may be delivered from evil.

9. What are the methods of social service?

It seeks to relieve distress and need in such ways as to help men most effectually; it also seeks to discover the causes and conditions of poverty, sickness, crime, and misery, and then to remove bad causes and conditions and create good causes and conditions; it believes that the church, the family, the school, the state are all means and agencies through which these ends may be sought.

10. Does social service seek to create another organization?

It seeks rather to aid the agencies of human uplift that now exist, to infuse into them the religious spirit, to co-operate with them in every way, and to use them as channels through which the efforts of Christian people may become effective.

11. What can one person do who is interested in social service?

He can study social conditions, help other people to see things as he sees them, seek to unite men in behalf of practical measures, join

with those who are engaged in some form of helpful service, and be an active and intelligent citizen in his own community.

12. What can a pastor do to promote social service among his people?

He can be a careful student of social questions in the light of the Scriptures; he can teach and illustrate the doctrine and example of the Master, and he can arouse and organize his people in behalf of social service, and he can take a sympathetic interest in the various uplifting agencies of the community.

13. What can a church do in behalf of social betterment?

It can have one or more classes engaged in social-service study; it can have committees studying the various agencies of social uplift in the community; it can have a positive and constructive program and can organize their efforts for effective work.

14. What can be done in a united way in behalf of community betterment?

Have a Federation of the Churches, which shall secure unity of purpose and mass the conscience of the people at any one point. The Federation should have a Committee on Conciliation and Arbitration for industrial disputes; it should support all righteous and faithful officials; it should voice the conviction of the men of good will in the community. Every community should thus have in some visible

form not only churches, but a united church of Christ in common service.

15. Name several immediate and practical things that can be done.

Secure for every worker one day's rest in seven; have a censorship committee of all moving-picture and other shows; equip a playground within half a mile of every home in the city; make efficient the agencies seeking to suppress gambling, the social evil, alcohol, and all habit-forming drugs; see that there is a good child-labor law and that it is enforced; have regular inspection of tenements and rooming houses; support the Juvenile Court; have a systematic canvass of the community.

16. What is the ultimate purpose of social service?

It seeks to create such a social order in the world as shall realize the Christian ideal of human society, to give each soul a true inheritance in life, to develop a perfect life in a perfect society, and to make Jesus Christ a fact in the universal life of the world.

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Bibliographies and Reading Courses will be supplied on application to the above representatives.